A

SERIOUS and AFFECTIONATE

ADDRESS

To the CITIES of

London and *Weſtminſter*;

Occaſioned by the late

EARTHQUAKE.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed for and Sold by Mrs NUTT and COOKE, at the *Royal Exchange*; Mr ROBINSON, in *Ludgate-ſtreet*; JACOB LOYSEAU, at the *Bible* in St *Clement's* Church-yard; Mr WOODFALL, at *Charing-croſs*; and Mr CHAPELLE, in *Groſvenor-ſtreet*. M.DCC.L.

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To the CITIES of

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Fellow Citizens, and Fellow Chriſtians,

THE general conſternation you have been under from the late Shock of an Earthquake, I hope has had its due effect, and been a more alarming call to Repentance, than ten thouſand Sermons, or Acts of Parliament.—You have had many calls from Heaven, which few have heard with due attention.

I. THE hand of GOD has been long upon your Cattle which is in the field, the effects of which have been ſorely felt by all ranks and orders of men: It has baffled the ſkill of Phyſick, and the Precautions of Policy; and how much longer it may laſt, and whether it may not reach to the other ſpecies of Cattle, and at laſt to ourſelves, none can tell, but all have reaſon to fear.

II. THE *Locuſts* have made their appearance in ſmall numbers for two or three years together, as a warning from heaven, that except ye repent, they will come as an overflowing ſcourge, as they did upon the land of *Egypt*, Exod. x. 15. *ſo that they covered the face of the earth, ſo that the land was darkned: They eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, ſo that there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field.*— The publick Papers inform you, that this has been the caſe of many of our neighbour nations, who can hardly be imagined to be greater ſinners than ourſelves. From whence we have reaſon to fear, that, except we repent, the ſame ſcourge will fall upon

upon us, that has ſo long lain heavy upon them; And whether this open, mild Winter, may not help to produce them in greater numbers, time muſt ſhew. The dealers in *ſecond Cauſes*, who have very wild notions of Providence, tell you, you need not be afraid of theſe Inſects, that they are produced only in hot countries, and can only by accident be brought hither, or ſubſiſt in theſe cold climates. But experience has ſhewn us, that from whatever country they come, they are here, and can live and breed here; and where they have appeared in great numbers, as they did laſt Summer in ſeveral parts of the country, have done incredible miſchief; and ſhould GOD for our ſins permit them to multiply among us, to devour the graſs, the green corn, and all the tender productions of the fields and gardens, imagination itſelf cannot conceive the diſtreſs and terror that muſt attend it.

III. YOU have juſt now been viſited with an *Earthquake*, at the ſame time that the weſtern parts of the Kingdom have been ravaged by violent Storms and Tempeſts, and you have juſt received the ſhocking account of the Storms and Deſtruction

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in the *Eaſt-Indies*. Can you ſee, and hear, and feel theſe dreadful tokens of divine diſpleaſure, and be ſtill inſenſible! GOD forbid.

I MUST own, I expected to ſee in ſome or other of the Daily or Weekly Papers, which are publiſhed in this great Metropolis, ſome religious improvement of this general conſternation; ſome ſerious addreſs to ſerious Readers; ſome awakening call to the Unconverted and Impenitent: —— But inſtead of this, we have ſeen a dry, cold, formal account, of the natural cauſes of *Earthquakes*, publiſhed in the *London Evening Poſt* *: The Author of which ſeems to account for it wholly by *ſecond Cauſes*, without the leaſt regard to the Great Creator and Judge of the world, who as the Firſt and Supreme Cauſe of all, has given, and continues to give theſe ſecond Cauſes, their ſeveral powers and directions; not a word of the Moral and Judicial Cauſes, which never fail to produce their proper and genuine Effects upon the Children of Diſobedience.

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* Vide *London Evening Poſt*, Feb. 13, 1749-50.

I WOULD not be ſo uncharitable to the Author of this humane, philoſophical Addreſs, as to charge him with intentions which perhaps he never had: But the beſt that can be imagined is this; That he was either deſired, or commanded, or hired by ſome *Lovers of Mankind*, (as they call themſelves) to publiſh this account, in order to remove the terrors, and compoſe the minds of the weak and ſuperſtitious, by aſſuring them, that there is nothing in the whole affair but the ordinary effects of *ſecond Cauſes*; and theſe he reckons to be four. *Firſt*, "The Earth itſelf." *Secondly*, "Subterraneous Waters." *Thirdly*, "The Air pent up in the too narrow viſcera of the Earth." *Fourthly*, "Fire is the principal Cauſe, both as it produces the ſubterraneous Air or Vapour, from the different matter or compoſition of which, ariſe Sulphur, Bitumen, and other inflammable ſubſtances; ſo that it is kindled either by ſome other fire it meets with, or its colliſion againſt hard bodies, or its intermixture with other fluids, and burſting out into a greater compaſs, the adjoining Parts are ſhaken; till having forced a paſſage, it ſpends itſelf in a Volcano. —

" An Earthquake, *he ſays*, happened at *Ox-*
" *ford*, 1665. and another in 1683." And ſo he concludes as calmly as he begun — " But they are not attended here with the " terrible appearances they have in hotter " countries." — How cool and comfortable is this account! With what inſipid ſerenity does he attempt to compoſe the terrors, which this trifling accident may have raiſed among weak and ignorant people! — It is more than probable, that ſome fine Gentlemen and Ladies may have been diſcompoſed by this unſeaſonable ſhock, in the midſt of their pleaſures; that it might poſſibly have baulk'd many an aſſignation, and ſpoiled many a merry meeting. It might poſſibly drive ſome polite, miſerable ſinners to Church or Confeſſion; who would otherwiſe have graced the Theatres, Amphitheatres, and other places of genteel reſort and entertainment; and in ſhort, give a check to all that gay Idolatry that reigns among the worſhippers of the *God of this world*. And if the Managers of the ſeveral Play-houſes found themſelves not ſo crowded as they uſed to be, they might well be frighted, and think it worth their while to retain an Advocate on ſo alarming an occaſion.

It is ſaid, that ſome prodigious agreeable people, who are always refining the taſte and pleaſures of the town, have been put to the trouble and expence of making *Earthquakes* of their own. *Opera's*, *Maſquerades*, *Ridotto's*, *Aſſemblies*, *Drums*, *Routs*, &c. were grown ſo common, that they were quite tireſome and inſipid, till ſome great and happy Genius aroſe, who improved this low taſte into ſomething great, magnificent, and terrible; and what ſhould this be but an *Earthquake* — An elegant Aſſembly of very fine, and very wiſe folks, of both ſexes, who met together to dance, to romp, to be ſtark ſtaring mad, to throw the houſe out at window, and the whole neighbourhood into convulſions and conſternations, this is ſtiled an *Earthquake*. Now ſhould it have ſo happened, that one of theſe charming meetings ſhould have been interrupted by the ſhock of a real *Earthquake*, cauſed by Him, *who* (as the Prophet tells, *Jer.* x. 10.) *made the earth by his power, and eſtabliſhed the world by his wiſdom, and whoſe wrath maketh the earth to tremble*; it might perhaps have frighted ſome of theſe merry Gentry into their ſenſes, and ſerious reſolutions never to play the fool any more in

that way; and ſo the Town might have been deprived of all the prodigious pleaſures and advantages ariſing from theſe pretty amuſements: For after all, how could the very clever people of both ſexes live without them? They would certainly be quite at a loſs how to diſpoſe of their time and money; and would be in a manner compelled to live in the ſame dull, joyleſs ſtate, as they did in the days of gloomy Superſtition, or primitive Chriſtianity, which fleſh and blood cannot endure. — It was therefore a ſeaſonable, humane attempt of this learned Writer, to apply the known principles of ſound Philoſophy to the cure of vulgar prejudices and frighted imaginations. Had any of theſe fine merry folks been cruſh'd in the midſt of their jollity, by the ruins of the houſe where they were aſſembled, and removed to *their proper place*, in a new world of Spirits, (and ſuch there may be, for ought they know to the contrary) it would have been a great conſolation to them and their ſurviving friends, to know that all this was *natural*, and that all the care and caution in the world, could not prevent natural cauſes from producing their proper effects——

BUT to be ſerious — Is not this, think you, a ſtrange abuſe of Philoſophy! Is not this undermining the very foundations of Virtue, and diſarming Heaven itſelf of thoſe terrors, which are every where denounced againſt the vices and follies of a gay, giddy, licentious, impenitent generation! Is not this applying lenitives and opiates, when cauſtics and inciſions are requiſite! Is it a time to ſpeak peace and ſecurity to a mad generation, immerſed in luxury and debauchery, when GOD and Nature call upon us to *cry aloud; not to ſpare, but to lift up our voice like a trumpet*, and awaken them to a juſt ſenſe of their guilt and their danger! I hope this was not the intention of the Writer; but I think it was the only effect he could reaſonably propoſe, by this eaſy, * *entertaining* account, (as he calls it) of this dreadful, alarming phænomenon.

GOD was pleaſed, in great mercy, to give the old impenitent world of ſinners an hundred years warning, that except they repented, they ſhould all be deſtroyed by an univerſal Deluge. — It is not to be doubted, but that the Philoſophers and Wits of thoſe

 days,

* Vide *London Evening Poſt.*

days, who, I am apt to think, were as wiſe and as witty as theſe of ours, made themſelves very merry with the preachments and prædictions of *Noah* about this matter: No doubt, they undertook to demonſtrate to thoſe who were weak enough to be frighted, both from the nature and generation of Dews, Rain, and Clouds, and the ſpherical figure of the Earth, that ſuch an event was abſolutely impoſſible; and crack'd many a ſcurvy joke, upon the poor old man's notable contrivance to ſave himſelf and his family from being *drowned* upon *dry land:* Thus they reaſoned, and laugh'd, and were merry, *till the day that Noah entred into the ark, and the flood came, and ſwept them all away.*

HAD it pleaſed GOD to have given the ſinners of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* any previous warning, by the preaching of a Prophet, or the ſhock of an Earthquake, which, with the fire from Heaven, compleated their ruin, they would not have wanted Philoſophers to calm their fears, by aſſuring them, there was nothing in it but the natural effects of their ſituation; that their ſoil abounded with beds and pools of ſulphurous and bituminous matter, called (*Gen.* xiv. 10.)

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ſlime pits; and that it was almoſt impoſſible in the nature of things, but that ſuch concuſſions muſt happen. It can, I think, hardly be doubted, but that *righteous Lot, whoſe righteous ſoul was vexed from day to day by the filthy converſation of his wicked neighbours*, (2 Pet. ii. 7, 8.) did, beſides the good example he gave them, take every prudent opportunity to reprove them for their ſins, and admoniſh them of their danger; but nothing could mend them: *They continued*, as our LORD tells us, (*Luke* xvii. 28.) *eating and drinking, buying and ſelling, planting and building, till it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed them all.*

LET it not be imagined, that theſe two inſtances are produced as parallels to the preſent ſtate of theſe great Cities, or this Nation: GOD forbid.— There are, I truſt, numbers, great numbers of devout and pious ſouls, who bear their publick teſtimony, and greater numbers who mourn in ſecret, for the crying ſins of this Nation; and daily offer up their prayers to GOD, that our publick Iniquities may not be our ruin. — But that the moral and religious ſtate of theſe Kingdoms, and this great Metropolis,

tropolis, in particular, are in great diſorder, who can deny? The open profaneneſs and irreligion of the *Great*, and the diabolical licentiouſneſs of the *little* Vulgar; — the general profanation of the Lord's day; — the Churches in many places almoſt deſerted, whilſt the publick Roads and places of Reſort are crowded with company: — The open and avowed Perjuries, Lies, Subornations, *&c.* in the political world, encouraged and protected by thoſe, who are bound in duty and honour to detect and puniſh them: — Theſe, and many other enormities, which every man ſees, and every good man laments, give us too much reaſon to fear, that ſome National Judgment will quickly overtake us.

But, (ſay You) why this unreaſonable zeal at this time of day? Was not the world always bad? Has not this been the complaint of every age? Are we worſe than we have been formerly? Are we worſe than our Neighbours?

How bad our Neighbours are, I know not; nor does it concern us to know: but that we are *very bad*, every man who is not obſtinately blind, cannot help ſeeing. If

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any man judge otherwiſe, let him tell me, let him tell the world, let him ſatisfy himſelf, that all is well, that we have nothing to fear, nothing to apprehend from the wickedneſs of men, or the judgments of GOD; and I ſhall not contradict him.

BUT if the direct contrary be the judgment of every ſerious and conſiderate mind, what can be more ſeaſonable than the advice of the Prophet, Dan. iv. 27. *that we break off our ſins by righteouſneſs, and our iniquities by ſhewing mercy to the poor; and ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto us?* John v. 14. When we have done our beſt, we ſhall be in no danger of being *over-righteous:* Happy will it be for every one, that can aſſure himſelf he has done the beſt he could, *to keep always a conſcience void of offence towards GOD and towards man.* Such a man will have *nothing to fear, though the* EARTH *be* REMOVED, *and the Mountains carried into the midſt of the Sea,* Pſal. xlvi. 2. Or, if the language of *Horace* pleaſe you better,

Si fractus illabatur orbis
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.

FINIS.